of India to operate to SAARC countries against the unutilized entitlements of Indian side subject to the provisions of the Air Services Agreement. Such operations can be from any airport in India. Actual operations are, however, matters of commercial judgement of the airlines.

Excise duty on EPI products

†*316. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to State:

(a) whether it is a fact that the excise duty on production under the Food Processing Industry is collected in the country;

(b) if so, the rates on which the said excise duty has been collected during 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03; and

(c) the amount collected by Government during the above period, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. However, a number of products of the Food Processing Industry are exempt from excise duty.

(b) and (c) The rates of central excise duty on excisable products of Food Processing Industry and the revenue realized there from during the years 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03 are given below:

S. No.	Description	Year 2000-01	Year 2001-02	Year 2002-03
1.	Concentrated/condensed milk, whether sweetened or not, put up in unit containers (Chapter 4)	16%	16%	16%
2.	Malt and starch of grains other than tapioca and maize, (Chapter 11)	16%	16%	16%
3.	Preparations of meat, including chicken and meat products and Fish, packed in unit containers and bearing a brand name (Ch. 16)	16%	16%	16%

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

S. No.	Description	Year 2000-01	Year 2001-02	Year 2002-03
4.	Sugar confectionery, such as, white chocolates, gums including chewing gum, bubble gum etc. (Chapter 17)	16%	16%	*16%
5.	Cocoa preparations and chocolate (Chapter 18)	16%	16%	16%
6.	Meals (those put up in unit containers) (Chapter 19)	16%	16%	16%
7.	Pasta, whether or not cooked or stuffed or otherwise prepared such as spaghetti, *macaroni, noodles, lasagna, gnocchi,* ravioli, cannelloni, couscous, whether or not prepared, put up in unit containers (Chapter 19)	16%	16%	16%
8.	Break fast food, such as, corn flakes put up in unit containers (Chapter 19)	16%	16%	16%
9.	Biscuits made with the aid of power (Chapter 19)	16%	16%	16%**
10.	Malt extract (Chapter 19)	16%	16%	16%
11.	Preparation of Fruits, nuts and vegetable, such as, jams, jellies, marmalades, fruit and vegetable juices (packed in unit containers and bearing a brand name) (Chapter 20)	16%	Nil	Nil
12.	Protein isolate (Chapter 21)	16%	16%	16%
13.	High protein food (Chapter 21)	16%	16%	16%
14.	Non alcoholic beer, like fruit beer (Chapter 21)	16%	16%	16%
15.	Sauces, ketchup, Soups, Broths and like put up in unit containers and bearing brand name (Chapter 21)	16%	Nil	Nil
16.	Other processed food preparations bearing brand name (Chapter 22)	16%	16%	16%

S. No.	Description	Year 2000-01	Year 2001-02	Year 2002-03
17.	Aerated waters and soft drinks (Chapter 21)	40%	32%	32%***
18.	Specialized packaging for food processing industries (Chapter 48, 76)	16%	16%	16%
19.	**Total Revenue collected (Rs. crore)**	**2049**	**1688**	**1881**

*Duty on sugar confectionery excluding white chocolate was reduced to 8% *w.e.f.* March, 2003.

**Duty on Biscuits was reduced to 8% *w.e.f.* March, 2003.

***Duty on aerated waters and soft drinks was reduced to 24% *w.e.f.* March, 2003.

Items, other than mentioned above, are in general exempt from excise duty.

IRDA's delegation to United States

*317. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether top functionaries of Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority are on a fact-finding mission to the United States; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard including the areas of interest of the mission.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A team consisting of Chairman, two wholetime Members, an Executive Director of IRDA and Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Finance recently visited United States of America and Canada to study the regulations of insurance market alongw the effectiveness of mechanisms to protect the interests of policyholders in these countries, also their relevance and applicability in India.

Improvement of Guwahati Airport

*318. SHRI ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to refer to Unstarred Question 1 given in the Rajya Sabha on 26th February, 2002 and state: